

Teachers' Vocabulary for a Visit to Fort Matanzas and St. Augustine

These are words that students might read or hear park rangers and other guides speak of during their visit to Fort Matanzas, the Castillo de San Marcos, and St. Augustine.

bar --a sandbar or shallow area at the mouth of an inlet. Most military and merchant ships were too large to cross the bar and enter the harbor at St. Augustine. Supplies were off-loaded onto smaller, shallow-draft vessels which could navigate the shallow water.

barrier island --a long, thin sandy or limestone island along the shore between the ocean and the mainland. Anastasia Island is a barrier island.

bastion --the pointed, projecting corner of a fort which allows for crossfire and for visibility along the walls. The Castillo de San Marcos has four bastions, each named for a saint.

blockade --the closing off or surrounding of a place such as a city or harbor by attacking troops or ships in order to prevent entrance or exit. General Oglethorpe of Georgia tried this tactic against St. Augustine in 1740.

bronze --a metal alloy of copper (at least 89%) and tin (no more than 11%). Some of the cannon at the Castillo are bronze. They are the ones with the green patina and were more expensive, but lasted longer, than iron cannon. Fort Matanzas had only iron cannon.

brazier --a shallow metal pan for holding charcoal used to heat a room. The officer's quarters at Fort Matanzas used a brazier since there is no fireplace in that room.

canister shot --a metal can filled with musket balls and shot out of a cannon which produced a scatter effect very effective against ground troops.

cannon --During the 17th-18th centuries, these were mostly muzzle-loading guns. Powder and shot was loaded from the front and rammed down and then touched off with a "match", a glowing rope on a long stick. Cannon were named according to how much the cannon ball weighed. For example, a gun that shot a ball weighing six pounds was called a "six-pounder".

casemate --a vaulted room. The Spanish used the casemates at the Castillo mostly for storage.

Catholic --Believers in the Roman Catholic Church. One belief is that the apostle Peter was the first pope. Until the early 16th century, Catholicism was the only Christian faith in Europe.

cistern --a reservoir or tank for holding rain water as a source for drinking water. The water cistern at Fort Matanzas is inside the base and was filled by rain water draining off the roof.

citrus --The Spanish had brought citrus trees to the New World early on, so oranges, lemons, and limes would have been grown in St. Augustine.

coquina --a type of a limestone rock formed from shells (mostly the tiny coquina clam) cemented together by their own calcium over about 500,000 years. Beginning with the building of the Castillo de San Marcos, coquina became used as a durable building material in St. Augustine.

covered way --the area outside a fort between the moat and the glacis, sometimes behind a wall. Soldiers could be sent out into the covered way and would be "covered" (protected) by musket fire from the fort.

crenellation --an opening in a parapet through which a cannon might be fired.

creole --the Spanish term for a person born in the New World. St. Augustine was a creole town.

curtain wall --the expanse of wall between two corners of a fortress. The curtains of the Castillo are about thirty feet high. Those of Fort Matanzas are about 10 feet.

estuary --a body of water and/or marshland where saltwater mixes with fresh. The Matanzas River is an estuary.

garita --Spanish word for sentry box, a place where the guard could come in out of the weather. The garita is a typical architectural feature of the Spanish forts in the Caribbean. The Castillo has a garita on three of its bastions, and a watchtower on the fourth. Fort Matanzas has one garita.

galleon --a large, square-rigged sailing vessel of the 15th - 17th centuries used for both merchant and fighting ships. Galleons were too large to cross the bar at St. Augustine or at Matanzas.

garrison --a body of troops stationed at a fighting place. St. Augustine was a garrison town with quite a diverse population. There would be whites, blacks, mestizos, and mulattos in the Spanish garrison of St. Augustine.

glacis --the sloping hill around a fort which protects the base from cannon fire. Visitors walk up and through the glacis to enter the Castillo.

gunpowder --an explosive mixture of potassium nitrate (saltpetre), charcoal, and sulfur.

Huguenots --followers of the Calvinistic movement in France during the Protestant Reformation of the 16th-17th centuries.

inlet --the opening between barrier islands. Anastasia Island has the St. Augustine Inlet to its north and the Matanzas Inlet to its south.

lime --(calcium-oxide) The ingredient used in cement or mortar which causes it to harden. The Spanish would burn oyster shells to make lime.

loophole --a small, narrow opening in the wall of a fort through which to shoot.

magazine --a storage place for gunpowder. For years, the old magazine at the Castillo was falsely called the "dungeon". The magazine at Fort Matanzas is inside the west wall and is accessible only from the officer's quarters.

massacre --a mass killing or slaughter, often for persecution or revenge.

mestizo --the Spanish term for a person of mixed Indian and white (Spanish) parentage. The female form is *mestiza*. Many lower ranked soldiers married Indian women, and their children would be mestizos.

midden --trash pile. All along the coast are "shell middens", large piles of oyster and clam shell, animal bones, and bits of broken pottery left by the Indians for thousands of years near their villages and camps.

moat --a ditch around a fort or castle. The Castillo had a dry moat. It was a way to sink the fort into the ground behind the glacis so that not much wall would be visible and thus it would be better protected from cannon fire.

mulatto --a person of mixed black and white parentage. There were many mulattos in St. Augustine.

parapet --the wall around the roof of a fort.

privy --an outhouse

quarry --a open air pit from which building stone is cut. A large coquina quarry was located in the area of present-day Anastasia State Recreation Area. The coquina for Fort Matanzas came from a smaller quarry south of the Matanzas Inlet.

ravelin --a V-shaped outwork. The Castillo's ravelin, directly in front of the door, protected the door from cannon fire and also guarded the drawbridges.

redoubt --a fortified projection in a wall. The defensive walls of St. Augustine, like the Cubo Line, had redoubts with cannon placed at intervals along them.

scupper --a drain hole. Rain water ran off the observation deck at Fort Matanzas through a scupper, into a pipe, and thus into the water cistern located below the gun deck. There are also scuppers all along the upper deck of the Castillo.

solid shot --a non-explosive, solid cannon ball, the most common shot of the 17th - 18th century.

stockade --a wall made from posts stuck upright into the ground close together.

tabby --a building material made from ground up oyster shells, lime, sand, and water, said to be of West African origin. The Spanish commonly used it for walls, floors, and roofs in St. Augustine. It was sort of a "poor man's coquina".

terreplein --the top platform of a fort on which cannon are placed.

Timucua --the name that Europeans gave to Native Americans who lived in what is now northeast Florida at the time of European contact. We do not know what they called themselves.

tour of duty --length of time a soldier spends at a posting. The tour of duty at Fort Matanzas for a Spanish soldier was 30 days.

vara --the Spanish "yard" equal to 33 English inches.

Students' Spelling and Vocabulary for a Visit to Fort Matanzas and St. Augustine

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canister shot --a metal can filled with musket balls and shot out of a cannon which produced a scatter effect very effective against ground troops.

casemate --a vaulted room. The Spanish used the casemates at the Castillo mostly for storage.

cistern -- a reservoir or tank for holding rain water as a source for drinking water. The water cistern at Fort Matanzas is inside the base and was filled by rain water draining off the roof.

coquina --a type of a limestone rock formed from shells (mostly the tiny coquina clam) cemented together by their own calcium over about 500,000 years.

crenellation --an opening in a parapet through which a cannon might be fired.

estuary --a body of water and/or marshland where saltwater mixes with fresh. The Matanzas River is an estuary.

garita --Spanish word for sentry box, a place where the guard could come in out of the weather.

garrison --the body of troops stationed at a fighting place.

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lime --(calcium-oxide) The ingredient used in cement or mortar which causes it to harden.

magazine --a storage place for gunpowder.

massacre --a mass killing or slaughter, often for persecution or revenge.

midden -- a trash pile. Florida has many Indian middens full of shells and bits of pottery.

moat --a ditch around a fort or castle. The Castillo had a dry moat.

six-pounder --a cannon which fires a six pound solid cannon ball.

tabby --a building material made from ground up oyster shells, lime, sand, and water.

terreplein --the top platform of a fort on which cannon are placed.

Students' Vocabulary Activity

Match the definition by placing the letter in the space next to the correct word. Not all definitions will be used.

- A. The top platform of a fort on which cannon are placed.
- B. The pointed, projecting corner of a fort which allows for crossfire and for visibility along the walls.
- C. The ingredient used in cement or mortar which causes it to harden.
- D. A body of water and/or marshland where salt water mixes with fresh.
- E. A building material made from ground up oyster shells, lime, sand, and water.
- F. A sentry box.
- G. A metal can filled with musket balls and shot out of a cannon
- H. A storage tank for rain water.
- I. A mass killing or slaughter, often for persecution or revenge.
- J. The closing off of a harbor by attacking troops or ships in order to prevent entrance or exit.
- K. A trash pile, often made of shells.
- L. How much a cannon weighs.
- M. A secure place where gunpowder is stored.
- N. A type of a limestone rock formed from shells cemented together by their own calcium.
- O. A cannon which fires a six pound solid cannon ball.
- P. The ditch around a fort.
- Q. A long, thin sandy island along the shore between the ocean and the mainland.
- R. The body of troops stationed at a fighting place.
- S. An opening in a parapet through which a cannon might be fired.
- T. A vaulted room in a fort.
- U. A small window

_____ cistern

_____ magazine

_____ midden

_____ garita

_____ blockade

_____ garrison

_____ estuary

_____ canister shot

_____ terreplein

_____ massacre

_____ barrier island

_____ tabby

_____ six-pounder

_____ casemate

_____ crenellation

_____ lime

_____ bastion

_____ coquina

Students' Vocabulary Activity

Answers

Match the definition by placing the letter in the space next to the correct word. Not all definitions will be used.

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Additional Student Activities

1. Create a word search game or a crossword puzzle using at least ten of the vocabulary words. Ask a classmate to try to solve it.
2. Write a story using at least ten of the vocabulary words. It may be on any subject. It does not have to be about St. Augustine.